

Free Asian Fears

CPYRGHT

SIR: It is a shame when a writer puts something on paper one day, only to have it thrown back in his face the next by new events. This is the fate of one of your columnists, Clayton Fritchey. In his recent column "Does Asia Fear Red Apocalypse?" he says: "With the exception of three small client states (Thailand, South Korea, South Vietnam) nearly all Asian mainland nations disagree with U.S. policy in the area, both as it relates to the war and our three-alarm assessment of future Chinese intentions."

Mr. Fritchey then proceeds to name those countries which border on China and to say that they have not been "expressing themselves in similar terms" (about Chinese aggression) to Mr. Rusk.

Poor Mr. Fritchey. His lack of knowledge about Asian geography and politics was clearly shown up the same day his article was printed. Prince Souvanna Phouma, prime minister of Laos, and Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew were here in the United States telling President Johnson that many millions of mainland Asians were concerned about the Chinese and communism in general. Souvanna Phouma, who was treated badly by the United States only a few years ago, said that he, for one, "was grateful that you came to Indochina to help us survive," for "if tomorrow South Vietnam became Communist, all that would be left for us to do would be simply to pack up and go. . . . If it were not for your presence, Laos and indeed all of Southeast Asia would fall under Communist influence." These are precious words coming from a man who is trying to make the concept of "neutralism" a reality in world affairs by keeping his country neutral despite Communist Pathet Lao-North Vietnamese attacks.

Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew is another man who had comforting words for President Johnson. He called for "patience, perseverance and prudence" in an effort that is designed, "in a world full of bears and dragons," to help the nations of Southeast Asia maintain their independence.

If the U.S. were to withdraw too hastily from Vietnam, he warned, internal subversion with outside support would quickly run Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore through the Communist 'mincing machine.' These are unusual words from a man who put the United States in its place by exposing both CIA and State Department bribe attempts to him.

In case Mr. Fritchey looks at a map of Asia, he will notice that the Philippines, New Zealand, Australia, Formosa, and Indonesia are there. The leaders of all these countries have stated their support for the U.S. effort in Vietnam and have also stated that if Vietnam fell to the Communists, they too would either fall or be seriously threatened. Japan is the odd case; but remember, the Chinese have no love for the Japanese because of World War II. What Japan says on the surface about Vietnam is not what is said privately about Vietnam and Red China. Privately they say that if Vietnam falls, so will the rest of mainland Asia (Southeast) and Japan will eventually fall under the domination of Red China.

So Mr. Fritchey had better review his maps and back statements of Asian leaders because he is in for a big surprise.

By the way, your editorial "Is U.S. 'Victory' Impossible in Vietnam?" was the best I have ever seen on this subject! We can win!

Max P. Friedman.

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